India's Patent Ordinance

1259. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether USA has protested at W.T.O. over India's Patent Ordinance;

(b) if so, the grounds on which objection has been raised; and

(c) the details of India's clarification/ reaction to the points raised?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) US requested consultations with Government of India under Article 4 of the Understanding of Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU) on the Patent (Amendment) Ordinance, 1999 promulgated by India as they wanted clarification and more details information on the Ordinance. Accordingly consultations were held at Geneva on 11.2.99. India clarified that the Ordinance was in conformity with its obligations under the TRIP's Agreement.

Gold Imports in the Country

1260. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantity of gold imports into the country in the current fiscal year;

(b) the expected quantity of gold imports in the current fiscal year; and

(c) what is the trend in the value of gold in the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Total quantity of gold imported into the country in the current fiscal year 1998-99 (up to January, 99) is 442.18 M.T.

(b) Expected quantity of gold imports in the current fiscal year is likely to be around 550 tonnes.

(c) Trend in the value of gold in Mumbai in the last three years are as under:—

1996	Rs. 5190	per 10 gms.
1997	Rs. 4654	per 10 gms.
1998	Rs. 4048	per 10 gms.

WTO's order on Export of Shrimp

1261. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that US has sought fifteen months' time to implement the World Trade Organisation order asking Washington to lift the ban on shrimp imports from India; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Consultation were held between US and India along with other Co-complainants in this case. On 21.1.99 the concerned parties agreed to 13 months from the date of adoption of the Appellate body Report (6.11.98) as the reasonable period of time under Article 21.3 of the Understanding on Rules and procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputs (DSU) for the United States to comply with the recommendation of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB).

Problems Faced by Tobacoo Farmers

1262. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Tobacoo Board has not interacted adequately with C.T.R.I. and other organisations in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether it is also a fact that tobacoo farmers have faced losses due to bad quality seedlings recently in Andhra Pradesh;

(c) what steps have the Tobacoo Board taken to be alert to such situations which affect Andhra tobacoo farmers;

(d) whether the help of the industry and farmers' associations has been sought in this regard; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir. The major areas of collaboration of Tobacoo Board with C.T.R.I. and other organisations in Andhra Pradesh are:

(i) Conducting training programmes to field staff and tobacco growers in improved production technology at different phases of tobacco growth under different Auction platforms.

(ii) Study tours of farmers to acquaint themselves with the latest practices of tobacoo cultivation.

(iii) Conducting on-farm trials to demonstrate latest methods of crop production and varietal trials to test the performance of pipe-line varieties under field conditions.

(iv) Distribution of literature on improved package of practice to the farmers in the form of Booklets, pamphlets and news items.

(v) Supply of pure seed of high yielding varieties to the needy farmers.

(vi) Monitoring the pesticide residue levels in different areas and suggesting suitable measures to eliminate the residues.

(vii) Technical guidance for implementing Quality and Yield improvement programmes.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

Trade Centres in Foreign Countries

1263. SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) are planning to establish more centres in foreign countries within two years;

(b) if so, the details of the proposals; and

(c) the details of the centres located in foreign countries, with details of their field of operation and the number of staff at such international offices of ITPO?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) ITPO in line with the recommendation made by a Committee of its Board of Directors, set up to analyse the functioning of the foreign offices of the organisation, are planning to set up a new office in Latin America. The new office would undertake trade promotion activities in the potential markets of that region.

(c) Overseas offices of ITPO are located in New York, Frankfurt, Tokyo, Moscow and Dubai. Each foreign office is manned by Resident Director.

These foreign offices are providing a range of marketing and export promotion services to the interested parties such as trade fairs, contact promotion programmes, market surveys, India Promotion with Department Stores, product catalogue display, assisting trade delegations, commercial information & market intelligence, publicity through trade & tgechnical magazines, introduction of products in new markets etc.